

Supervisory District Conservationist Performance Plan 2008

(1) MISSION RESULTS

(critical)

Demonstrates support for NRCS strategic goals and initiatives within the State and contributes to the achievement of overall Agency initiatives. Stresses accountability and continuous improvement to employees/team members, makes timely and effective decisions, and produces results through strategic thinking and decisive action. Demonstrates responsiveness to management, the public, and to internal and external customers. Continually reviews, monitors, and strives to improve organizational performance to achieve NRCS mission results. Finds ways to help the organization make getting conservation work done easier - for both employees and the public. Identifies common-sense ways to get more people interested in conservation and opportunities to eliminate red-tape and unnecessary bureaucracy.

Alignment: Accomplishment of the objectives in this element contributes to the accomplishment of the following Agency goals and mgt initiatives: USDA Strategic Goal 6; NRCS Strategic Goals 1-6, and the USDA and NRCS Mgt Initiative to Establish Budget and Performance Improvement.

Links to 2008 ASTC for FO Performance Objective Performance Objective (4): Develop and implement strategies to increase participation in NRCS conservation programs/projects by assisting field personnel of the importance of maintaining and improving customer relations.

Performance Objective (1): Provide conservation planning, technical and financial assistance to private land owners and producers to achieve annual targets for Budget and Performance Integration (BPI) goals, on-time delivery of program services; on-scheduled implementation of participant contracts and increases in putting conservation on the ground.

Performance Standards/Measures

- Provides guidance to land users and producers to ensure conservation plans adhere to all applicable NRCS policies and include multiple alternatives, is economically and technically feasible and addresses resource needs
- Facilitates training on the policies, techniques and procedures on developing conservation plans for field staff
- Provides guidance to producers and land users in completing required documentation (i.e. engineering studies, specifications & paperwork) in accordance with the established guidelines to avoid contract delays that may impact practice implementation
- Meets 90-100% of annual target for BPI goals

- Monitors ProTracts ensuring program contracts are properly entered into within the established timeframes and potential problems and delays are identified and actions taken as appropriate
- Monitors program contracts for compliance with program and policy guidelines. Actively follows-up via communication and correspondence for non-compliant contracts and considers taking alternative actions (i.e. modifications, cancellations) as appropriate.
- At least 90% of scheduled contracted practices are implemented by the established project timelines. Alternative options (i.e. contract modification and cancellations) are considered for non-compliant contracts. Maintains a reporting process to keep management apprised of status changes, issues and variances in meeting timelines
- Provides technical assistance to land users, producers and local conservation groups in order to resolve resource issues to facilitate the implementation of practices. Identifies other technical resources to address questions outside of areas of expertise (i.e. area, state specialist)
- Maximizes the utilization of program funds by identifying opportunities to match programs with land user conservation needs
- Addresses conservation needs and issues by collaborating with local and government organizations
- 90% to 95% of practice implementations are completed in accordance with practice standards
- Ensures practice reimbursements are approved for payment within 5 business days after work is completed.
- Demonstrates new technology and tools to land users prior to contract implementation to increase their understanding of available resources

Performance Objective (2): Develops and implements a Field Office Plan that aligns with the Area and State Business Plan .

Performance Standards/Measures:

- Develops and implements a current Field Plan for assigned territory that includes deadlines and specific staff responsibilities to guide Field operations of putting conservation on the land at the local level. Ensures the plan aligns with the State Business Plan and addresses local needs. The outcome is a management tool to guide field operations to achieve the Agency's strategic goals and objectives.

- Monitors performance against the Field Plan. 80-90% of the action items in the Field Plan are accomplished by established due dates.

(2) SUPERVISION

(critical)

Work is assigned in a fair and effective manner. Technical guidance to subordinate staff is ordinarily provided in a timely manner. Performance management is implemented in accordance with procedure. Issues, concerns, or problems are handled promptly and fairly. To the extent possible, staff is properly trained and complies with occupational health and safety programs. Management decisions are supported and implemented within appropriate timeframes.

Alignment: Alignment of the objective of this element contributes to the USDA and the NRCS Management Initiatives to Improve Human Capital Mgt; Improve Financial Mgt; Expand Electronic Government, Eliminate Improper Payments and Improve Real Property Mgt

Links to 2008 ASTC Field Operations Performance Objective (3): Provide leadership and vision across the Area to increase conservation benefits achieved through effective and efficient implementation of technical and financial resources and to increase employee satisfaction as measured through productivity and feedback from employees and customers

Performance Objective (3): Provide leadership and management to the assigned staff that effectively allocates workload; identifies and addresses personnel issues; and motivates, develops, and rewards employees resulting in an increase in employee satisfaction as measured through productivity and feedback from employees and customers.

Performance Standards/Measures

- Ensures the management process for increased staff productivity and satisfaction during the fiscal year to includes: regular review and adjustment as necessary of workload balance and location of staff; staff receiving technical, managerial, and administrative guidance; quality assurance systems that monitor activities, identify problem areas, and initiate actions within established/agreed timeframes; innovative solutions to resolve issues, improve management, or capitalize on emerging opportunities; periodic review of progress against goals; making adjustments to ensure that progress is sufficient to meet goals; setting priorities and goals; delegating appropriate authority; managing performance to include recognition and reward of employees as appropriate; ongoing feedback and applicable training for staff; escalation of issues/problems, when appropriate; and reviews for employee compliance with NRCS policy and Federal regulations

- 100% of performance plans for direct reports are aligned with organizational goals (NRCS Strategic Plan and State Business Plan), focus on expected results, are equitable, and are written , established and communicated in accordance with agency policy (meet

SMART criteria) by January 30, 2008. Employees provide feedback that they are involved in the development of performance plans and/or specific performance goals.

- Individual Development Plans (IDPs) are in place for all direct reports within 30 calendar days of the finalized performance plan. Mentoring opportunities are identified and opportunities for providing developmental assignments are explored.

- Provides forum for regular communication with assigned staff to ensure the following:
(a) to establish an atmosphere that encourages open communication and supports both team work and individual effort, (b) to inform employees of work unit objectives, Agency policies and procedures, important events, and other pertinent information/issues, and (c) to discuss ideas and concerns with employees.

- Feedback from staff indicates that they have been provided adequate information and involvement so that they: (a) understand the Agency's direction, district's goals and their role in achieving these goals; (b) understand what is expected of them; (c) were involved in developing their performance plans; (d) understand how well they are performing and where they need to improve; (e) have performance plans that accurately reflect their performance requirements; (f) have the necessary tools and resources to accomplish their work; (g) where they do not have what they need, they understand why; and (h) have the skills and knowledge they need to do their jobs, or a plan to obtain them; are acknowledged and appreciated for good performance.

- Ensures employees are trained in the use of new technology and tools prior to utilization

- Actively promotes awareness and enforces strict adherence to ethics and standards of conduct statutes, regulations, policies, and procedures.

- Accomplish the following: (a) ensures 100% of employees complete mandatory training by the established due dates, (b) financial disclosure notice is filed within established timeframes (c) ensures 100% of employees have successfully completed the Computer Security Awareness and Privacy Refresher training by assigned due dates.

Consults with the Office of Ethics and other appropriate resources as needed, (d) monitor submission of Employees forms and information in a timely matter to Ethics Advisors and that, where needed, approval is obtained prior to engaging in the activity, and (e) recommends appropriate discipline action as needed for employee violations of statutes, regulations, policies or guidance and makes these recommendations to supervisor in a timely manner.

- Uses unique identifiers established for the Federal Government in the Central Contracting Registry for any contracts, grants, and for a business or individual, if available. Ensures that all records containing Social Security Numbers are safeguarded when the person's name SSN are combined

(3) EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/CIVIL RIGHTS (EO/CR)

(Critical)

Equal Opportunity/Civil Rights: Performs all duties in a manner which consistently demonstrates fairness, cooperation, and respect towards coworkers, office visitors, and all others in the performance of official business. Demonstrates an awareness of EO/CR policies and responsibilities of the Agency and the Departmental goals of valuing a diverse, yet unified workforce.

Alignment: In support of USDA's Civil Rights Performance Plan and NRSC Mgt Initiative: Ensuring Civil Rights.

Links to 2008 ASTC FO Performance Objective (5); implement and track strategies to move NRCS closer to reflect the Civilian Labor Force and strategies that are designed to provide parity in service delivery. Track and analyze workforce diversity trends, including retention, promotions, and participation in leadership development programs, training and other development opportunities.

Performance Objective (4): Develop and implement outreach strategies at the local level to provide parity in the delivery of conservation services and technical assistance, ensuring equal access to all ethnic and underserved land users.

Performance Standards/Measures:

Program Delivery: Monitors and provides reports to leadership on the number of women and minorities who participate in Agency programs.

- Accomplish the following: (a) takes affirmative steps to increase the level of participation by businesses owned and operated by women, minorities, service disabled veterans, small and disadvantaged businesses, and American Indians/Alaskan Natives, in State contracting activities during the year, and (b) supports and participates in at least three outreach initiatives to ensure all customers receives equal opportunity to access programs, activities, and services consistent with the Agency's Civil Rights Performance Plan and NRCS' Strategic Plan

- Increase participation of underserved customers by 5% to 10%

- Submits an Outreach Plan by due date and provides updates on progress being made and accomplishments completed by the end of the fiscal year as instructed.

- Submits articles, public interest stories and new conservation practices for publication in local and minority newspapers to garner interest in new programs. A minimum of 1 article per year must be submitted.

- Ensures that all local/district media coverage, press releases and other communications provided are: (a) generated in a timely manner, (b) informative, and (c) effective and pertinent to local issues, programs and new development

Performance Objective (5): Supports USDA's Civil Rights Performance Plan and NRCS Management Initiative to maintain a workforce that more closely reflects the Civilian Labor Force. Provides guidance and information to staff on safety and health.

Performance Standards/Measures:

Employment – Takes affirmative steps to recruit, hire, train, and promote employees from diverse backgrounds

- Position marketing and recruitment strategies reflect assessment of the labor market and position competencies, potential candidate pool, and diversity goals.

Accountability – Performance against EO/CR goals. Ensures all employees have a civil rights performance element in their individual performance plans which link to the Department's Consolidated Civil Rights Performance Report objectives and the Agency's strategic plan. Ensure that staff completes mandatory Civil Rights training.

- Provides leadership and fosters a workplace environment that supports civil rights and EEO (free of discriminatory bias and reprisals; and where the workforce, customers, and business partners are treated fairly with dignity and respect). Ensures that timely disciplinary action of subordinates is taken in cases where civil rights of others are violated

- Advises employees that each will be held accountable for compliance with civil rights, and establishes, through personal example, that when addressing employees, delivering speeches, making public appearances, or representing NRCS in any capacity, inappropriate comments regarding race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status will not be tolerated

Complaint Processing – Makes good faith efforts to resolve employment complaints and workforce disputes at all times, particularly early in the process, by offering alternative dispute resolution, training, and alternative assignments; by timely response to request for information from EEO counselors, mediators, investigators, and adjudicators.

- Responds to EEO counselors, mediators, adjudicators, investigators by mutually established dates.

Safety and Health -- Ensures that each office has an Office Evacuation Plan and that employees have information and guidance to comply with occupational health & safety programs and to manage in the event of a disaster and emergency situation.

(4) CUSTOMER SERVICE

(non-critical)

Alignment: This objective contributes to the accomplishment of the USDA Strategic Goal 6: Protect and Enhance the Nation's Natural Resource Base and Environmental, NRCS Strategic Goals 1-6.

Links to 2008 ASTC FO Performance Objective (4); Develop and implement strategies to increase participation in NRCS conservation programs and to maintain and improve customer relations.

Provides advice that is timely, responsive, and accurate. Maintains appropriate rapport with internal and external customers. Develops and establishes working relationships with external organizations as required. Keeps supervisor and/or team leader informed of difficult and/or controversial issues and unique problems. Takes action to effectively solve problems before they have an adverse impact on the organization, or on other employees.

Performance Objective (6): Ensures responsiveness to organizational leadership, internal and external customers, partners, and the general public to maintain and improve customer relations.

Performance Standards/Measures:

- Consistently provides information/advice that is timely, responsive, and accurate. Maintains appropriate rapport with internal and external customers. Develops and establishes working relationships with external organizations as required. Keeps supervisor informed of difficult and/or controversial issues and unique problems. Takes action to effectively solve problems before they have an adverse impact on the organizational unit or on other employees or customers.
- Attends a minimum of 80% monthly district board meetings in the counties assigned as district conservationist and assigns staff to attend at least one of the district meetings in each district that the staff regularly serve. Each district shall have NRCS representation in at least 90% of the monthly district board meetings.
- Follows through on customers' inquiries, requests, and complaints. Keeps customers up-to-date about the progress of projects.
- Maintains clear communication with customers regarding mutual expectations and follow through.
- Feedback from Customers indicate satisfaction with: (a) the quality of service delivered, including indication that any necessary collaboration met their needs, (b) the quantity and quality of information provided increased their understanding of NRCS administrative programs, (c) the services provided or solutions offered met their overall needs, and (d) information and data provided was accurate and provided by expected due dates.

(5) INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TEAM

(non-critical)

Regularly demonstrates the ability to contribute to the success of the team and does not put individual needs or preferences ahead of the team. Works to build camaraderie and teamwork both internally and externally with partners and Technical Service Providers (TSP's), to achieve common goals and accomplish priorities.

Alignment: Contributes to the NRCS Management Initiatives for EEO, Fair and Equitable Service Delivery, Human Capital, and Budget and Performance Integration.

Links to 2008 State Conservation Performance Objective (5); provides leadership and vision across the State to increase conservation benefits achieved through effective and efficient implementation of technical and financial resources and to increase employee satisfaction as measured through productivity and feedback from employees.

Performance Objective (7): Openly and consistently demonstrates a commitment to maintain and improve the team environment and places emphasis on strong internal communication and working relationships.

Performance Standards/Measures:

- Regularly cooperates with coworkers and others in meeting commitments and accomplishing assigned work on time; i.e., sharing information freely
- Fosters productive and cooperative working relationships by showing understanding, courtesy, tact and politeness to others with no more than 3 valid complaints
- Consistently raises concerns in constructive manner and offers potential solutions

Communications:

Communicates clearly and shares accurate information with area and field staff as appropriate to deliver up to date information

- Responds to general program questions within 2 business days with no more than 4 exceptions. Elevates more complex questions to supervisor or other individual responsible within 2 hours of inquiry
- Schedules staff meetings on a regular basis and after major program announcements and more often if required
- Prepares written documents that are clear, concise and understandable as well as following prescribed procedures and within established timeframes with no more than 3 exceptions
- Regularly shares program for which one is responsible with co-workers to increase staff awareness of all program areas within timeframes established by management 90% of the time

- Resolves disputes and problems with others through use of problem solving, conflict resolution and negotiation